



NEWS RELEASE – March 12, 2020

Women in Tunneling (WIT) Observes Women in Construction Week *UCA of SME Affiliate Tours Texas Project*

In celebration of Women in Construction Week, Women in Tunneling (WIT), an affiliate of the Underground Construction Association of the Society for Mining, Metallurgy & Exploration ([UCA of SME](#)), held their first tunnel tour. Atkinson Construction hosted the group at their San Antonio, Texas, project on February 15, 2020. The project includes the construction of three tunnel drives, one open cut, and five shafts for the installation of 10,550 feet of 54” welded steel pipe.

Led by Atkinson’s Audrey Housson (field engineer) and Lizan Gilbert (Preconstruction Executive), the tour included a full walk through the TBM tunnel, observation of pipe installation, and a visit to the completed 500-foot hand-mined tunnel. In addition, the group met key project personnel and discussed possible locations and dates for future WIT tunneling tours.



*L to R: Zuzana Skovajsova, Audrey Housson, Lizan Gilbert, Amanda Kerr,
Ashley Heckman, Emily Haddad & Gabrielle Ferro*

WIT was founded in 2012 as a support association for women in tunneling to network with like-minded professionals. In 2019, WIT became an affiliate to the UCA of SME Division. The mission of the UCA Division is to promote the wise and effective development and use of underground space. Joining with UCA has enabled both organizations to expand and grow their international visibility, career opportunities and professional development.

As the number of women establishing careers in the underground design and construction industry grows, WIT focuses on providing a network and strong support association for women to share experiences and offer mentorship in the underground industry. For more information, visit their [Community Page](#).

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SME is a professional society (nonprofit 501(c)(3) corporation) whose members represent all professions serving the mining, minerals and underground construction industries in more than 100 countries. SME members include engineers, geologists, metallurgists, educators, students and researchers. SME advances the worldwide minerals community through information exchange and professional development.

*SME exists to be the premier resource and advocate for the mining community.
For further details, see www.smenet.org.*